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Disarmament Commission

222nd Meeting
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New York

Chairman: Mr. Martynov . . . . . (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

General exchange of views *(continued)*

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It gives me pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission and to convey our appreciation to the representative of Colombia, Ambassador Andelfo García, who last session presided over the work of the Commission with such distinction.

It is a source of satisfaction to my delegation that the Disarmament Commission has on its agenda an item on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, an area in which Latin America was a pioneer. It is our hope that the four existing nuclear-weapon-free zones will be joined by a new one in Central Asia. We commend the important initiative of Mongolia in that connection.

We believe that all this means that what is being established, more than a theoretical doctrine, is a network of specific international agreements involving an ever-larger number of Member States of the United Nations, including those that have a certain level of nuclear development. And all of these constitute a united front against nuclear weapons, both those that exist already and those that might be built in the future.

The opinion of the International Court of Justice has strengthened the development of this majority — and, in our view, unstoppable — position. The Charter confirms the sovereignty of States and also their rights to security, but the Charter could not foresee the power of nuclear arms. This is why the first resolution adopted by consensus in the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament laid out a programme and warned of the urgent need for a type of disarmament that was not achieved during the cold war.

In today's world, one of economic globalization — which, in our opinion, goes beyond coexistence to a sort of convergence of certain political spheres — nuclear arsenals and the conservative view with regard to their elimination, or at least reduction, not only run counter to the idea of peaceful coexistence and security, but are incomprehensible to and unconvincing for the non-nuclear developing countries, unless we interpret the threat posed by these arsenals as promoting the resolution of conflicts. Negative guarantees, voluntary and without any commitment or legal obligation, are, in this regard, a symbol of insufficiency.

Peru accepted the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Recently we were one of the first to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty because we agreed that the spectre of proliferation is increasingly threatening. But we know full well that the lack of significant progress in the area of nuclear disarmament, or least in the reduction of nuclear weapons, is reinforcing the privileges of certain Powers who have the opportunity to augment their advantages through laboratory tests. So whether to sign these agreements was a dilemma, a choice between two evils.

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As regards conventional weapons, from the outset Peru responded vigorously to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, because we are a country that loves peace, which is indispensable for the development of our people. The Register, unfortunately, is neither obligatory nor perfect. There are States that, regardless of their size, have armed forces that are subsidized by public ventures and by tax or commercial preferences. We believe that regional measures for the control and limitation of weapons in Latin America do not necessarily have to depend on actions to control and limit weapons at the global level. For this reason, at the time we were concerned about licences for the sale of military aircraft by a third country to the Latin American region and finally about the lifting of a great Power's embargo in order to be able to sell sophisticated weapons to the Latin American region.

Peru will always put forward its proposals for agreements and concrete measures to build mutual confidence and full respect for international law and treaties. We are pleased to announce that Peru has ratified the amended Protocol II of the Conventional Weapons Convention, on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of mines, booby traps and other devices. We are also pleased to have worked tirelessly on the agreements that were reached in Ottawa regarding the elimination, transfer and sale of anti-personnel mines. We are gratified that Latin America, once again, has taken the initiative in developing the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. This instrument was drafted within the Organization of American States (OAS).

In connection with the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 52/38 F sets a goal that the great Powers cannot allow to fail. In this respect, the document of the Chairman of last year's Working Group provides a good foundation for solidifying the objectives and the agenda for that session.

Finally, we agree that it is indispensable that the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament rationalize their objectives, so long as that rationalization does not lead to the loss of objectives and topics that are of vital interest to all Member States, and in particular to the developing, non-aligned and non-nuclear States.

Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission for its 1998 session. At the same time, we want to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Andelfo García for his skilful and effective work during the last session.

The Secretary-General's reform — establishing the Department for Disarmament Affairs — having been implemented, we must say how pleased we are at the appointment of Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala to head that Department. We admire the positive spirit, the experience and the optimism with which the new Under-Secretary-General of the Department approaches disarmament issues, and we cannot forget one of the sentences he is so fond of repeating to us:

> "The twentieth century saw the birth of nuclear weapons, and the twenty-first century will see their destruction."

We do hope that will be the case.

Unfortunately, the end of the cold war was not accompanied by a reduction in global conflict. Not long ago, Secretary-General Kofi Annan reminded us that 4 million people have been victims of armed conflict since the collapse of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989.

That is why my delegation attaches particular importance to General Assembly resolution 52/13, which declared the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. In the next session the plan of action will have to be implemented. This broadens the original vision of the United Nations, when its main concern was avoiding war among nations.

Today it is broadly recognized that the majority of conflicts are internal in character and that many of them stem from poverty, environmental destruction and disregard for the fundamental rights and basic tenets of a tolerant, democratic society.

The current proliferation of existing weapons and the control that must necessarily be exercised by the United Nations means that resolution 52/38 G, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", gains a new dimension, because never before has it been so necessary to achieve international peace and security at the lowest level of armaments. We fully agree that the main role is to be played by those States that are most affected by this proliferation of small arms.

My delegation understands that this Commission must be revitalized, and we cannot allow laziness or empty exercises to prevail. Analysing reports year after year does not lead to the adoption of effective measures, and we urge everyone present to make substantive suggestions, so that disarmament will not stand in isolation but become the contribution that we all owe to our peoples. That is why we believe that we cannot leave undefined issues as important as the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the consideration of which is to be completed this year. Weak statements in this respect will lead nowhere.

With regard to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, our experience with the Treaty of Tlatelolco prompts us to support the expansion of such agreements to all regions on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at. We recognize that they are a complementary tool for the attainment of the central objective of complete and universal disarmament.

We believe that the Disarmament Commission can renew its agenda so as to make it more in tune with the present. It will be necessary to prepare an up-to-date inventory of items related to weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons and to their non-proliferation. We know that many constructive contributions can be made to improve the agenda of this Commission, and we associate ourselves with them because we believe that its revision can be delayed no longer.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, and to congratulate the members of the Bureau. I should like to wish everyone success in their work at this session.

The indefinite extension in 1995 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons became one of the most important events for strengthening the non-proliferation regime for weapons of mass destruction. As a party to this Treaty, Kazakhstan strictly complies with its international obligations and consistently carries out a policy of non-proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. More than six years ago, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan took the decision to close the Semipalatinsk nuclear-test site, where 459 nuclear explosions took place, 113 of which were in the atmosphere. Kazakhstan was one of the first to carry out its obligations in accordance with the Lisbon Protocol, thereby eliminating the fourth-largest Power in the world in terms of its nuclear potential.

We believe that at present there is an urgent need to make further progress in the area of non-proliferation. In this context, we believe that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, an idea that in recent years has become increasingly recognized, deserves serious attention from the international community. As representatives know, there are at present four such zones in the world, which together cover more than 100 States. If we include the Antarctic, their impact extends to more than 50 per cent of the Earth. Nuclear-weapon-free zones attract attention primarily because they provide a means of developing and encouraging common values in nuclear disarmament and arms control. Their existence in various parts of the world makes it possible to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The significance of such zones for strengthening global and regional peace and security was again confirmed by the documents of the 1995 Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which reviewed and extended the Treaty, and by the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty.

A further step to strengthen the non-proliferation regime was the initiative taken by the Central Asian States, expressed in the Almaty Declaration of 28 February 1997, on the establishment in the region of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This could become the next real contribution to ensuring global security on the part of the States of Central Asia, after their accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the withdrawal from the territory of Kazakhstan of the nuclear weapons that we inherited.

The issues involved in bringing to life the idea of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia were taken up at the International Conference on Problems of Nuclear Weapon Non-Proliferation, which took place at the beginning of September 1997 in Kazakhstan. They were also discussed at the international conference in Tashkent in mid-September last year. We are grateful to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his support for this idea, to which he referred in his statement to the participants in the International Conference in Kazakhstan. The adoption by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session of resolution 52/38 S, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone

in Central Asia", provided convincing evidence of the support by Member States for the idea of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our region.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank again, on behalf of the delegation of Kazakhstan, those delegations that gave their support to this idea during the meetings of the First Committee and of the present session of the Disarmament Commission. The history of the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones shows that they can be a truly effective factor in reducing tension and creating favourable conditions for development in the region. At the same time, experience of existing zones shows that their establishment requires careful and meticulous work. Therefore, Kazakhstan is of the view that there is a need for gradual and ongoing work in this area.

We believe that in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia special attention should be focused on ecological security and environmental problems resulting from more than 40 years of nuclear tests at the Semipalatinsk test site, as well as the problems associated with uranium mining and the radioactive waste stored in the region.

We believe that it is very important to establish close cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy among the participants in the zone. We are aware of the complexity and responsibility involved in adopting a decision to establish such a zone and of the need for careful preparation on all the related issues with the participation of experts from all interested parties.

In Kazakhstan, proposals are currently being elaborated and presented to the States in the region on the fundamental elements of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, and we hope actively to participate in all the meetings of experts that have been planned.

The international community is facing a very complex task: finding effective ways and means to slow the proliferation of conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons. Therefore the item on guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, which is on the agenda for this session of the Commission, is an important and timely one.

Strengthening the principle of transparency and openness in military issues, as set forth in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, is broadly supported by Member States, including Kazakhstan, which has been making available the necessary information since the Register came into existence.

The delegation of Kazakhstan supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General set forth in the report "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" on the need for reviewing the activities of the Disarmament Commission in order to enhance its effectiveness and to strengthen its role in considering complex questions on the agenda of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We believe that a constructive approach in discussing the items on the agenda for this session with a view to arriving at consensus decisions will help in dealing with this task.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): Let me begin by offering our congratulations to you, Sir, as Chairman of our Commission, and to your Bureau. Your chairmanship marks once again the very active participation and leadership of your country on the issue of disarmament.

Allow me also to express our deep sense of gratitude to Ambassador García, who chaired our session last year with the patience and wisdom that only true experience can bring. I should like also to congratulate and offer our continuing support for Mr. Dhanapala as he takes on the important task of promoting disarmament in the United Nations context.

The Philippines believes that the agenda of our session is a balanced one and holds the potential for advancing the cause of disarmament. There was a time when we thought that the Disarmament Commission would never get around to including the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Ironically, at a time when nuclear-weapon-free zones continued to grow and prosper, we hesitated to include it in our discussions.

We must not let something similar happen. We must not constrict the prospects for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones nor try to impose standards on those zones that would subvert their nuclear-disarmament dimension.

For the Philippines, the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be discussed with the very premise of the creation of these zones always in mind — that of nuclear disarmament. Even in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the very spirit that sustains the desire to create and maintain nuclear-weapon-free zones is the spirit of nuclear disarmament. It would indeed be tragic if instead of

promoting nuclear disarmament, such zones became a tool for rationalizing and justifying the continued existence of nuclear arsenals.

We have already heard quite a bit about the requirements that some States are seeking to impose on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We welcome them, as we see them as useful for a full discussion of the issue of such zones.

In this regard, we welcome the current move to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, as was just described by the Ambassador of Kazakhstan. We also fully support the concept of single-nation nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Philippines is one of the very few countries whose constitution mandates it to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

While discussions on nuclear-weapon-free zones seem to be in full bloom, it appears that discussions relating to the special session devoted to disarmament are about to reach an end, at least in our Commission. While there has been some progress and welcome compromises from all sides on this issue, there is a need for us now to move towards a consensus on its objectives and agenda. The Philippines would like to welcome and commend in particular the flexibility shown on this issue by several delegations. It is the hope of the Philippines that our deliberations here will prove valuable and serve in facilitating this consensus.

We support the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) and the call from all sides for a balanced agenda. However, the question of nuclear disarmament in all its aspects should maintain some prominence on the agenda.

The Non-Aligned Movement has already made clear its views on the objective and agenda for SSOD IV. Perhaps it will be useful to hear the position of other groups on this issue. We could then proceed and seek some consensus.

Seeking a consensus would perhaps not be as difficult for our third and last item, that of guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament. The cause of global and regional stability and security will be greatly served if we are able to reduce or limit the number of conventional arms in the world. Tensions would be reduced and confidence built. Distrust would give way to trust, and misunderstandings would not give rise to conflicts.

While the Philippines is in favour of a comprehensive approach to this issue, particularly in the context of practical disarmament, we would like to support moves to give particular attention to the issue of small arms and light weapons. As a country that knows firsthand the devastation and misery that the proliferation of small arms can bring, we would like to give emphasis to this subject.

The Philippines is aware that much has already been done on this issue. Several States have invested time and resources in promoting the study of this issue and in developing measures to adequately address this problem. The preponderance of action on behalf of this issue should not prevent us from engaging in a meaningful discussion on the topic. Given the momentum behind this issue, perhaps it would benefit us all to push things a little harder and a little farther.

In pushing things forward, we might also find time to discuss the issue of how best to reform our disarmament efforts in the United Nations. We have a new and distinguished Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and we are eager to hear and discuss his views on the issue.

But reforming our work can only do so much. The Philippines is always for genuine reform, but with the continued refusal of some to acknowledge and act on the overwhelming global call to rid the world of nuclear weapons, perhaps no amount of reform can aid the cause of disarmament.

Focusing on reform can also have some unintended consequences. Dealing with reform might shift focus and attention away from substantive disarmament. Also, many nations already lack the personnel and material resources to deal with the demands of substantive disarmament and would have to shift some of those resources to discussions on reform. Come to think of it, some of these consequences may not be unintended at all.

In this regard, we are heartened by the growing movement, some of it within these very States — a movement led by former Heads of State or Government and former top military and defence officials, some of whom have commanded or worked with nuclear forces — to now argue in favour of nuclear disarmament. Perhaps the challenge for those of us who continue to spend so much time in the hallowed halls of the United Nations and in every forum on behalf of disarmament should find

a way to tap this growing movement in seeking to promote our common cause.

Thus it may be that we must call all our creative energies to the fore if we are indeed, in this body, to make a meaningful contribution to the cause of disarmament.

Ms. Kunadi (India): Allow me to express how pleased we are to see you, Sir, chairing this session of the Disarmament Commission and we join others in expressing our congratulations to you. We would also like to recall the able leadership and contribution of your predecessor, Ambassador García of Colombia, and to take this opportunity to thank him for his untiring efforts to carry forward the work of this Commission.

We convey our best wishes to Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala as he takes up his important assignment as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

My greetings also go to Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

To guide our work during this session, we have before us General Assembly resolution 52/40 B. Adopted by consensus, this resolution reaffirms the role entrusted to this body by the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly. As the deliberative leg of the disarmament machinery triad, the Disarmament Commission has a special responsibility in guiding the enhancement and promotion of the international disarmament agenda in the context of the work of the other two legs of this triad: the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament. The unique utility of this body is that it allows in-depth deliberation of items on its agenda with a view to formulating concrete recommendations, against the backdrop of the overall objectives of the disarmament agenda.

The elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is the most important objective on the international disarmament agenda. While the international community has made considerable headway towards disarmament of chemical and biological weapons, the most recalcitrant of issues — the elimination of nuclear weapons — awaits decisive action on the part of the international community. We must work towards a universal and indivisible prohibition of the use of all weapons of mass destruction. We cannot allow the success achieved in the field of eliminating chemical and biological weapons to be used as justification for the continued retention and possible use of nuclear weapons against the perceived threat of other weapons of mass destruction.

The expectation that the end of the cold war would also translate into an end to the threat posed by nuclear weapons to international peace and security has been belied. Doctrines of nuclear deterrence, with their hair trigger alerts inherited from the cold-war period, persist despite some reductions in the overall numbers of nuclear weapons. The refinement and upgrading of nuclear weapons and the search for new doctrines for their use, including against the perceived threat of other weapons of mass destruction, continue unabated.

The desire of the international community for urgent, concrete and meaningful steps on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons has been expressed clearly and forcefully in the resolutions of the General Assembly; the statements and declarations of the Non-Aligned Movement; the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice; and through the appeals of non-governmental organizations worldwide and the analytically rich studies of several distinguished institutions, many of them from the nuclear-weapon States themselves.

India attaches the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. We have proposed the immediate conclusion of an internationally binding agreement prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons, pending their complete elimination. General Assembly resolution 52/38 calls on the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations on a phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. We joined other delegations in submitting to the Conference on Disarmament a programme of action for elimination of nuclear weapons, in document CD/1419, and a mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, in document CD/1463.

The reluctance of some States to jettison the cold-war mental baggage of viewing nuclear weapons as a legitimate currency of international power and their attempts to freeze an unequal and untenable international order based on special rights and privileges for those possessing nuclear weapons have paralysed the debate on nuclear disarmament. This is best illustrated by the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament regarding forward movement on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. Our deliberations in

this Commission will necessarily have to take this into account.

General Assembly resolution 52/38 F, adopted without a vote, endorsed this Commission's recommendation that it continue consideration of the item relating to the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). Subject to the outcome of the deliberations of this session, including the emergence of a consensus on the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly would set an exact date for and decide on organizational matters of the convening of the special session.

We believe that SSOD IV would offer the international community an opportunity to review the current international situation and to assess the most critical aspects of the process of disarmament. The window of opportunity offered by the end of the cold war may indeed be closing on the priority issue of nuclear disarmament. An SSOD IV would allow focused international efforts, including mobilization of public opinion, in favour of the elimination of nuclear weapons and would strengthen the norm against all weapons of mass destruction.

To live up to the expectations of the international community, the special session should address priority disarmament issues and come up with a positive and forward-looking programme which will provide an organic continuum between the tasks agreed upon in the past and a programme of action for the future. There is a need to reaffirm the priorities in disarmament negotiations, set out by consensus in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with a view to preserving and building upon its achievements while focusing on finding ways and means to address the unfinished tasks.

Foremost among the unfinished tasks on the international agenda is nuclear disarmament, on which, as I mentioned earlier, there is an impasse. We believe that agreement on the agenda item on the special session would serve the important purpose of unblocking this impasse and provide an impetus for urgent action for the commencement of negotiations for the elimination of nuclear weapons. For the work of the special session to be meaningful, progress on nuclear disarmament would be essential.

For the work of the special session to be comprehensive, there would need to be consideration of other issues as well which impact on international security: a review of the implementation of the two Conventions on chemical and biological weapons; regulation of conventional armaments, such as mechanisms for improved transparency in conventional arms transfers; combating illicit transfers and regulation of those conventional arms which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects; and replacement of ad hoc export-control regimes with multilaterally negotiated, universally applicable non-discriminatory agreements to prevent proliferation. Measures to strengthen the multilateral disarmament machinery would also be necessary to provide the institutional support for a vigorous disarmament process as well as to clarify the competence of each part of that machinery in the context of the overall disarmament agenda.

As we resume consideration of this item for the third year, we have the benefit of the extensive exchange of views in previous sessions, including general agreement on elements of an understanding on the convening of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament, contained in the working paper of the Chairman. We also fully share the views set out in the working paper presented during the last substantive session on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and other States.

We also resume consideration of the agenda item on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the regions concerned. Several working papers were presented during the last substantive session. There was only a preliminary exchange of views, and more deliberation and reflection will be required before we are able to reach common understanding of the scope of our discussions under this item. In order to contribute to the Working Group and to clarify our position, my delegation will be submitting a working paper setting out our views.

We have consistently maintained that nuclear-weapon-free zones will remain partial measures of security unless they are anchored firmly in a process leading to the world-wide elimination of nuclear weapons. The threat posed by nuclear weapons is global in scope; so is the infrastructure supporting their deployment and use. Artificial delimitation of the spatial or technological dimensions of this global threat is unsustainable unless there is simultaneous action for the global elimination of nuclear weapons. The regional approach is subsidiary to the global approach and cannot

replace it. Therefore, India believes that given the global dimensions of nuclear weapons, nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions and areas of the world can only be considered an interim measure, pending achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament, on which negotiations are long overdue.

The practical utility of nuclear-weapon-free zones should also be measured against the yardstick of whether they encompass the full range of security concerns of all the States involved. This would, *inter alia*, require a definition of the area to be covered by the zone by the States participating in it, taking into account its specific geographic and geopolitical characteristics. The initiative for the establishment of such zones rests solely with the regional States concerned on the basis of arrangements and understandings freely arrived at through prior consultations and agreement.

India respects the rights of those countries which have chosen of their own free will to safeguard their security interests through their participation in nuclear-weapon-free zones established in keeping with the provisions of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly and with guidelines and recommendations endorsed by the Disarmament Commission in 1993. A comparative study of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones would be instructive as to the specific characteristics of each of the zones, while allowing us to draw general conclusions on their utility for the ultimate objective of achieving a world entirely free of nuclear weapons. We have noted recent proposals from concerned States that have expressed an interest in establishing such zones in Central Asia and in Central Europe. There are other new concepts and developments such as single-State nuclear-weapon-free zones, hemispheric nuclear-weapon-free-zones, nuclear-weapon-free space and so forth, and the impact of the revised nuclear doctrines of some nuclear-weapon States on nuclear-weapon-free zones; these deserve our attention.

During the 1997 substantive session we had an initial discussion of the agenda item entitled "Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N". We believe that there is need for further clarity about the scope of our discussions. It is important that our work under this item should focus on issues relevant to disarmament and should avoid duplication of work undertaken elsewhere under the "Agenda for Peace" or of activities covered by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee). Our focus should be on drawing up guidelines for consolidation of peace in post-conflict situations and applicable to the United Nations and/or competent regional organizations only in cases in which parties to a recently ended conflict agree to request such assistance from those bodies. Different conflict situations as well as their regional contexts have their individual and distinct characteristics. Therefore, the guidelines for post-conflict peace consolidation that we wish to draw up would need to be of a nature useful for global applicability. There is thus need to avoid emphasis on concepts or instruments which are confined to a regional focus.

On the other hand, we could benefit from previous work of this Commission: on drawing up guidelines for international arms transfers, in 1996; on regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security, in 1993; and on the study on conventional disarmament, adopted in 1982. There is also need to look at the international arms trade with a view to developing guidelines for greater transparency and accountability in the manufacture and transfer of small arms and light weapons. There is need to evolve measures for combating illicit transfers, which are often associated with terrorism and other destabilizing activities, including greater coordination and harmonization of national policies to fight this growing menace.

We look forward to substantive discussions on all agenda items before us, and I wish to assure you, Mr. Chairman, of the fullest cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): At the outset, Sir, I would like to extend to you my delegation's warmest congratulations on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, and to express my delegation's confidence that under your able guidance the Commission will be able successfully to fulfil its mandate for this year. I would like also to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Andelfo García of Colombia for his excellent chairmanship of the 1997 session of the Commission.

I congratulate Ambassador Dhanapala on his assumption of the post of Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and wish him all the best in his work. I welcome Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, to our meetings.

The importance of the work of the Disarmament Commission at this substantive session gains much significance as one of the items on the agenda will be discussed for the last time: the item on a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In this regard, Egypt reiterates its strong support for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Our support is based on the need to reflect the fundamental changes in international relations that have followed the cold-war era, and the emergence of a new world order based on cooperation not confrontation and thus providing a much more favourable atmosphere in which to concentrate on disarmament efforts. The latest achievements of the international community in the field of disarmament, whether in relation to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty or to anti-personnel landmines, along with the aspirations of the international community in the field of small arms and light weapons, should all be perceived within a comprehensive approach in accordance with the priorities set forth at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I), where nuclear disarmament was accorded the highest and utmost priority.

Our goal should be to build on the achievements embodied in the Final Document of SSOD I. SSOD I should constitute a model to be followed in our preparation for SSOD IV. Particular reference should be made in this regard to paragraph 45 of the Final Document of SSOD I [*General Assembly resolution S-10/2*], which states:

> "Priorities in disarmament negotiations shall be: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons; conventional weapons, including any which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects; and reduction of armed forces."

This is what we consider the point of our new departure, a point which would require the full positive political will of all States, particularly that of all the nuclear-weapon States.

Our endeavour in this regard should revolve around achieving general agreement on the agenda and fixing an exact date for the convening of SSOD IV, envisaged by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/38 F. This necessitates, in our view, finalizing the work of the Disarmament Commission on this agenda item during this session and presenting recommendations on organizational and substantive issues to the Assembly. It must be borne in mind that the flexibility demonstrated by the Non-Aligned Movement in not insisting on fixing an exact date for the convening of SSOD IV in resolution 52/38 F should not be perceived as a gambit, but rather as part of a perceptive approach: to make available all possible elements for an atmosphere within the Commission that is much more conducive to making possible the convening of the special session.

The paramount importance that Egypt attaches to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament within the Conference on Disarmament is only a reflection of our continued commitment to uphold the international community's priorities set forth, in the field of disarmament, by SSOD I. Our delegation in Geneva has worked constructively in this regard and has previously proposed a balanced mandate for the ad hoc committee, which we feel is still valid. Although the Conference was only able to agree to establish an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances — a step that has partially broken the deadlock that characterized the work of the Conference for some time now — Egypt still regrets that the Conference was and is still unable to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. We consider, however, the decision to entrust to the Conference presidency the task of pursuing intensive consultations on the issue a modest step forward. The responsibility in this regard is undeniably clear. We continue to call upon those States, most notably those nuclear-weapon States that persist in obstructing the realization of this goal, to honour the international community's commitments embodied in SSOD I and to adopt a more constructive attitude and a coherent approach in this regard.

All efforts exerted within the Disarmament Commission, the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament should complement each other, with the objective of achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This is the utmost priority on the international disarmament agenda. However, it does not diminish the significance of other disarmament matters, most notably in the conventional sphere.

My delegation is pleased to see on the Commission's agenda for the second year the item entitled "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned". This issue is even more topical given the results achieved at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-

Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which reaffirmed the conviction that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States concerned enhances global and regional peace and security.

In this regard we welcome once again the establishment of two nuclear-weapon-free zones — in Africa and South-East Asia. We welcome equally the serious efforts of the States of Central Asia to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region through the adoption of the Almaty Declaration, as well the encouraging results of the Tashkent meeting on this matter, which was organized in cooperation with the United Nations. Likewise, the initiative of the Government of Mongolia to establish a single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone also deserves special consideration and attention.

The Cairo Declaration adopted on the occasion of the signing ceremony of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, emphasized that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, for example in the Middle East, enhances global and regional peace and security. This is vivid testimony from the African States of the seriousness of the situation in the Middle East. Unfortunately, the Middle East is still far behind. The existence in Israel — the only State in the region that has not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — of nuclear facilities that are not subject to full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, along with Israel's operation of an ambiguous nuclear programme, are self-evident causes of alarm among States of the Middle East. Given this and Israel's consistent and deliberate policy to obstruct mere discussions in any regional forum — most notably within the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS) — on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, we feel that the Disarmament Commission has an extremely important role and task in this area.

We expect that the Commission's deliberations on nuclear-weapon-free zones will not be limited to formulating guidelines. Rather, they should result in the formulation of specific recommendations based on practical assessments of already established zones in order to further enhance the concept and to promote the ongoing efforts to establish further nuclear-weapon free zones, particularly in the Middle East. This would make the Southern Hemisphere a zone free from nuclear weapons, which would be a significant step towards a nuclear-weapons-free world. The States members of the Arab League presented two papers on nuclear-weapon-free zones at the Commission's 1997 session. We hope that they will be fully taken into account in our deliberations this session.

Another item on our agenda is "Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N". There is no doubt that the topic emanates from the continued importance we attach to conventional arms. However, this item should be seen within its specific dimensions.

The subject must be approached and tackled in a careful manner in order to avoid any duplication of work between the Commission and the panel of governmental experts established by the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons. It should also be noted that this item touches on various aspects of the work of the United Nations as a whole, especially in transitional areas from peacekeeping to post-conflict peace-building, as well as preventive diplomacy. Among these areas there are areas where no concrete definitions have yet been agreed upon. While there is room to draw some conclusions from practical experience and lessons from past and present peacekeeping missions, it would seem sensible, however, to restrict our consideration of the matter to disarmament alone and keep our distance from other areas that are not within the Commission's mandate and that are dealt with in other appropriate and competent bodies.

Finally, we hope that at this substantive session the Commission will build constructively on the achievements of the 1997 session, and to that end I assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation.

Mr. Mounkhou (Mongolia): On behalf of my Ambassador, who is out of town this week, I have the honour and pleasure to extend to you, Sir, my delegation's warmest congratulations on your election as Chairman at this session. My delegation is confident that our Commission will record further progress on the important agenda before us under your able and experienced guidance. Please thank Mr. García of Colombia for the commendable way in which he handled the Commission's affairs last year. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau, as well as to the chairmen of the Working Groups on their election.

Since the last session, there have been significant developments in the field of disarmament. I shall refer to just a few: the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction has been concluded and

worldwide efforts to eliminate landmines are under way and intensifying; the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has now been signed by 149 States, and ratified by 13, the latest being France and the United Kingdom, and the Preparatory Commission for the verification of the Treaty regime is actively engaged in the fulfilment of its mandate; and last but not least, a Department for Disarmament Affairs has been re-established in the United Nations Secretariat. My delegation wishes the Department success in meeting the growing challenges in the field of disarmament.

Last year's consideration of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones revealed a growing interest in it, which is perhaps due to the importance of the issue and to the spread of such zones. The paper presented last year by the Chairman of the relevant Working Group contains a number of the common elements for nuclear-weapon-free zones, including their scope and obligations. We believe that the current session can make notable progress on the basis of this paper.

Mongolia welcomes the national and regional efforts to strengthen the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world by, *inter alia*, developing cooperation arrangements among them. We believe that the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones should be encouraged and supported as they enhance national, regional and global peace and security and contribute to the objectives of non-proliferation and disarmament. In this respect, Mongolia supports turning the Middle East into such a zone, given the interest in it of the majority of the regional States and the region's importance for overall peace and security.

As a State situated in the heart of Asia, and bearing in mind Central Asia's location close by, Mongolia fully supports the active efforts of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their subregion. The adoption last year by the General Assembly of resolution 52/38 S was an important step towards its creation. Its implementation would be the next logical step — a step in which the United Nations could play a meaningful role.

As all may know, in 1992 Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone. By declaring its territory, which is as large as Central Europe, a nuclear-weapon-free zone, Mongolia is trying not only to ensure its security by political means, but also to contribute, in its own way, to reinforcing stability and enhancing predictability in its region.

Mongolia's initiative was welcomed and supported by the five nuclear-weapon States, including its two neighbouring nuclear Powers, China and Russia. It has also been welcomed by the entire membership of the Non-Aligned Movement. The initiative is in conformity with General Assembly resolution 3472 A (XXX) of 11 December 1975. Being the first of its kind, it has wider political and practical implications for dozens of States which are not parties to any existing or emerging zones. It is for this reason that Mongolia proposed last year to this Commission the consideration of the concept of single-State nuclear-weapon-free zones and the adoption of guidelines on the principles and modalities for the creation of such zones in parallel with those of conventional zones. In doing so it proceeded from the premise that a mere declaration is not enough to make a zone free from nuclear weapons, although the assurance given to Mongolia by the five nuclear-weapon States is an expression of support for the concept of a single-State zone.

We believe that single-State zones, like conventional ones, should have a legal basis so that the appropriate States' rights and obligations are clearly spelt out. We hope that the working paper that my delegation presented last year will prove to be helpful in highlighting this dimension of the nuclear-weapon-free zone issue and will be duly taken into account during the current session.

I would like to reiterate Mongolia's support for convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). We continue to believe that its convening is long overdue, given the new post-cold-war security environment which makes possible, and perhaps requires, the drawing up of a new, more concrete and exacting disarmament agenda. In this respect, I would like to note that my delegation does not view the special session in the context of nuclear disarmament only. It should be emphasized, however, that further significant progress in conventional disarmament is possible only in the context of nuclear disarmament.

We commend the efforts of Mr. Sudjadnan Parnohadiningrat of Indonesia, Chairman of the relevant Working Group last year, who was instrumental in bringing about business-like consideration of this issue and in piecing together a more detailed paper. We now have more meaningful outlines of objectives and substantive issues for SSOD IV. The current session will hopefully help enrich it and bring us closer to the convening of the special session.

Conventional arms control constitutes an indispensable part of disarmament efforts and promotes national, regional and international peace and security. In the view of my delegation, its role is bound to increase in the post-cold-war security environment, which is witnessing more internal conflicts than international ones. In this context, my delegation welcomes regional efforts to control conventional arms. At the same time, we would like to reiterate that conventional arms control and disarmament can be truly effective only if they address the root causes of instability and serve the interests of development.

The current session, hopefully, will be able to record further progress on the basis of the Chairman's paper on this subject, which we find a helpful framework for future guidelines.

The Mongolian delegation believes that a serious and honest consideration of the aforementioned issues can lead to practical disarmament measures and would promote a strengthening of regional and international stability. This would be beneficial in strengthening and revitalizing the role of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Babar (Pakistan): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Chairman of the current substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are confident that with your wisdom, rich experience in the field of disarmament and diplomatic skills, you will be able to successfully steer the work of the Commission during its current session. We would also like to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador García of Colombia for successfully conducting the work of the Commission during its substantive session last year.

Pakistan attaches great importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission. It is the only deliberative body with a universal membership. The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I) mandated the Commission to consider the elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament and to submit its recommendations to the General Assembly.

The creation of several nuclear-weapon-free zones over the last few years has been a welcome development. The consolidation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in Latin America, the adoption of the Pelindaba Treaty in Africa, the implementation of the Treaty of Rarotonga in the South Pacific, and the signing of the Bangkok Treaty by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries will pave the way for making the entire southern hemisphere a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

While Pakistan's proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia predates several of these initiatives, it is unfortunate that there has been no progress on the establishment of such a zone in our region despite the repeated calls of the General Assembly. Our proposal is part of our effort to promote a comprehensive approach to resolving problems in South Asia, including settling disputes and promoting security by addressing conventional and nuclear issues. We are hopeful that the Commission will make concrete recommendations to facilitate the commencement of the process of negotiations on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia.

There is an urgent need to hold a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to take stock of the developments in the post-cold-war era and to chalk out an effective plan of action consistent with the principles laid down in the Final Document of SSOD I. The international community now has a unique opportunity to achieve significant progress in disarmament, reflecting the wishes of the vast majority of Member States. We believe that any attempt at undermining the international consensus so painstakingly negotiated and arrived at at the first special session devoted to disarmament would be counterproductive. We hope that the Commission will be able to forge a consensus on the important issues related to the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

For the past several years, the General Assembly has been endorsing Pakistan's proposal for effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We believe that such assurances should be unconditional and legally binding. In this context, my delegation does not accept any new doctrines envisaging the threat or use of nuclear weapons by nuclear- weapon countries against non-nuclear States. The International Court of Justice, in its 1996 Advisory Opinion, stated that these doctrines contravened international law. In addition, these doctrines violate Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) as well as the protocols to the various nuclear-weapon-free zones.

An important item on the Commission's agenda relates to guidelines on conventional arms control and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation

of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N of 10 December 1996. Pakistan believes that the consideration of the question of the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons should take into account the need of all States to protect their legitimate security interests. Conventional arms control should be pursued primarily at the regional and subregional levels. A conscious endeavour is required to ensure against the creation of serious arms imbalances in various regions and subregions of the world, which can threaten international peace and security.

My delegation also believes that the threat to international peace and security cannot be removed without addressing the underlying causes of tension. The United Nations can and should play a role not only in creating conditions for reaching agreements on conventional arms control and disarmament but also in providing a framework for such agreements.

My delegation submitted a comprehensive working paper on guidelines on conventional arms control at the 1997 substantive session of the Commission. We look forward to a constructive and meaningful discussion on our working paper during the current session of the Commission.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the current session of the Commission will be able to build on the progress achieved at last year's substantive session. For our part, we assure you, Mr. Chairman, of our fullest cooperation in making this session a success.

Mr. Pham Quang Vinh (Viet Nam): At the outset, I extend to you, Sir, my delegation's warmest congratulations on your election to the important post of Chairman of the Commission this year. You and the Bureau deserve our full confidence and support. I take this opportunity to express also our deep appreciation to Ambassador García of Colombia for his outstanding role and contribution as Chairman of the last year's session.

The world situation today has been evolving with a mix of different trends, comprising both opportunities and challenges for the maintenance of international peace and security and the pursuit of disarmament.

The end of the cold war has opened up new opportunities for enhanced cooperation among nations in their common efforts to consolidate peace, find political solutions to a number of decades-old conflicts and achieve greater progress in the field of disarmament. We welcome all this progress, notably the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the strengthening of the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as efforts towards the establishment and consolidation of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

At the same time, we must recognize that much remains to be done. The end of the cold war has made it further clearly unjustifiable to maintain arsenals of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, not to mention maintaining them at their currently large number. Rather, it has underlined the greater need for as well as the possibility of doing away with those types of horrible weapons altogether.

We believe that lasting peace and security for all must be constructed on an equal premise. It is truly unfair that a few may be entitled to maintain absolute superiority while many other countries have to continue to live in the fear of insecurity. In this context, while welcoming efforts for further reductions in nuclear weapons arsenals, we firmly believe that it remains a matter of the highest priority for the world community to free this planet from the burden of nuclear weapons, devising a mechanism to ban them totally and resolutely. Both issues of non-proliferation and disarmament must therefore be addressed.

In the field of disarmament, the United Nations and other international forums have an important role to play. In our efforts to reform and revitalize these institutions, we should make sure that this role of theirs is strengthened. We welcome the new emphasis on disarmament in the United Nations Secretary-General's work on reform and the upgrading of the Department of Disarmament Affairs with the appointment of Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. In this process, the Disarmament Commission, in particular, has a unique role as a multilateral deliberative body on disarmament and, over the past years, has made great contributions to the formulation of guidelines in the field of disarmament. Its role and capacity as such should be further enhanced while we are finding ways and means to improve its functioning.

Last year, the Commission conducted extensive and serious discussions and consideration of the three items currently on the agenda of this session. The Commission presented a report on its work in 1997 containing the reports of its three Working Groups, which laid a useful

foundation for our work this year. At the same time, it identified a number of divergences of view that call for our continued, greater cooperation and efforts to arrive at agreement.

The new world situation related to international security and disarmament underlines further the need for a review of past experience and the development of new, common strategies in the field. With this aim, my delegation therefore fully supports the early convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). We share the belief that the forthcoming special session should take stock of the developments related to the world's political and security environment, review the past and look into the future, with a view to developing objectives and principles in the field of disarmament in the new world context. We hold that the question of nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction must continue to be an item of highest priority. We believe that the paper of the Non-Aligned Movement will serve as a good basis for our work aimed at reaching an agreement on the convening of the session. It is our belief that efforts should be made to arrive at agreement so that the preparatory process for the forthcoming special session can start as soon as possible.

My delegation shares the conviction that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned contributes positively to the enhancement of international peace and security. We welcome the considerable efforts of countries in different areas of the world in this regard, notably with the conclusion and consolidation of the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok. These efforts should be supported by the international community, especially the nuclear-weapon States. We support the approach of building a southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons, starting from the basis of the achievements of the existing Zones. With regard to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), we expect that the nuclear-weapon States will soon lend their support and recognition through their acceptance of the relevant Protocol of the Treaty. In this regard, we also welcome the initiatives of the Central Asian States, as well as that of Mongolia. From those experiences and efforts, we can benefit greatly in our work of developing guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the future.

With regard to the question of formulating guidelines on conventional arms, with particular emphasis on the consolidation of peace, last year the Commission conducted extensive discussions on the question of the scope of the item. The common understanding was that the work should focus on the conflict areas, bearing in mind the larger context of peacekeeping operations and the specific conditions of regions. In this regard, as has also been the case with peacekeeping operations, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations must be respected.

Although a lot of work is yet before us, it is our belief that further progress can be achieved through a process of our common, cooperative efforts for achieving a convergence of views. In this endeavour, my delegation will cooperate fully with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the Bureau and all delegations.

Mr. Čalovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): First, let me express the satisfaction of my delegation at seeing you, Sir, the representative of Belarus, as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at this year's session. You will have our support and cooperation. I would like to congratulate the members of your Bureau on their election to their high posts.

We share the positions contained in the statement of the representative of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

For the Republic of Macedonia, all aspects of the disarmament process are important. We continue to hold the view that the maintenance of international peace and security, global or regional, depends on the advancement of the disarmament process. From our point of view, the preventive effects of the process are of particular importance. While working hard to advance the process of disarmament, we should not forget why we are doing that in the first place.

I was pleased to note the Secretary-General's statement, delivered by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Prendergast, in Windhoek some days ago. He stressed that

> "The prevention of conflict is one of the founding purposes of the United Nations. It has assumed new urgency in recent years ...
>
> "For the United Nations, there is no goal more overriding, no commitment more compelling, no aspiration more profound than the prevention of armed conflict. Ensuring human security, in the

broadest sense, is the United Nations cardinal mission". [*Press release SG/SM/6514*]

This cardinal mission of our Organization cannot advance without advancement of the disarmament process.

In a general exchange of views such as the one we are engaged in at present, it is important to mention one or two general concerns of many Member States. One of these is the opinion that the process of disarmament is going through a critical period, if not more than that. The present dilemma of bilateral or multilateral arrangements or negotiations, particularly in the sphere of nuclear disarmament, has something to do with this. It is not realistic to expect that this dilemma will soon be overcome.

Another general concern relates to the increased interest by many States in better security arrangements owing to new geopolitical situations. Many States are more interested in better security arrangements than in disarmament arrangements. This situation is particularly prominent in the region of my country, where the priority lies in becoming part of existing security arrangements such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in economic and political integration with the European Union, and in the strengthening of European security arrangements. Everybody agrees that the disarmament process is very important, but one does not see much urgency in the way it is being pursued.

I have mentioned all of this because it will influence the character of the work of delegations. Positive results in the deliberations at this year's session of the Disarmament Commission could greatly help the needed advancement of the disarmament process.

My delegation's views on the agenda items before the Commission at its present session are generally known. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned is a straightforward, legitimate issue, and is in accordance with the United Nations Charter and other international instruments, particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At the same time it is a very complex matter because, as we know, the political and security situation is not the same in all regions. Each arrangement is therefore an individual case. We have to promote the goal to create a world without nuclear arms, and to further strengthen the NPT regime in the framework of nuclear-free zones, taking into account, as I said, the situation of the region and the positions of the States concerned.

Are we going to have a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, or not? This issue has been too long on our agenda, and arguments in favour or against continue to delay a decision; there is no consensus. Perhaps, however, a consensus will emerge. In the opinion of my delegation, it is not realistic to have a special session on disarmament during this century — maybe in 2001. The best way to proceed, in our opinion, is to start discussing the possible agenda of a future special session. In order for it to be the subject of consensus, the agenda should be a general one. It is possible that the special session in 2001 could adopt a disarmament agenda for the twenty-first century. That could be a very important achievement. In our opinion, the General Assembly should decide at its fifty-third session on the date of a special session in 2001 and should establish a preparatory committee to prepare it. This could be achieved if we abandoned the old positions and made a commitment that there would be no world war in the twenty-first century, that there would be no armed conflicts, and that all capacities would be devoted to development.

Control of conventional arms — and not only of small arms and anti-personnel landmines — is becoming a very important priority in the process of disarmament. The production of conventional arms should be controlled, along with stockpiling, trading and so on. We have to deal with this issue much more broadly and decisively than we have been doing so far. Establishing the guidelines is important, of course, but we should go further. No State can feel secure if it surrounded by more conventional arms than are legitimate and reasonable for national defence. We have to put offensive conventional arms on the agenda and find a way to eliminate their negative effects on the security situation. Taking into account the present situation in the region of my country, any progress on this in the Disarmament Commission would be appreciated and helpful. I also stress that the need for an international instrument to limit conventional weapons is, in our view, becoming more and more obvious.

Let me conclude with a few words regarding the future work of the Commission and of the First Committee. In our opinion, there is no doubt that reform is necessary. To be successful, this should be a part of the United Nations reform process. At present, as we all know, the First Committee is overloaded with disarmament items; there are no issues left for the Disarmament Commission. On the other hand, the First Committee has no opportunity to examine all the aspects,

all the details of an issue. So it is clear that we need either the Commission, or an expert body, or resumed meetings of the First Committee. My delegation is in favour of the last alternative. In future, the First Committee should deliberate practically all political and security agenda items. Again, this would be possible if we could have resumed sessions, as the Fifth Committee does.

We are pleased to have with us Mr. Dhanapala and Mr. Petrovsky, leading names in the field of disarmament. I am sure that we will benefit from their presence. I am looking forward to an interesting and productive session of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. I am confident that under your chairmanship the Disarmament Commission will achieve its prescribed objectives.

I would also like to express my delegation's sincere gratitude to Ambassador García of Colombia, who conducted the proceedings of the Commission in 1997 in such an exemplary manner.

May I take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to Ambassador Dhanapala on his well-deserved appointment to the post of Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

The end of the cold war, ushering in a new international environment and forging a new spirit of understanding and cooperation across the globe, has provided a golden opportunity for the Disarmament Commission to fulfil its mandated responsibilities to advance the cause of disarmament. The Commission, as the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, is indeed a unique forum where Member States can make an in-depth examination of specific key security and disarmament issues and promote the implementation of the relevant decisions and recommendations of the tenth special session of the General Assembly through the submission of recommendations and the formulation of guidelines on those issues. The Commission can successfully fulfil its task if its deliberations are conducted in a cooperative and harmonious fashion.

We note with satisfaction that the Commission has taken appropriate steps in recent years to rationalize its work with a view to dealing with the issues concerned more effectively and expeditiously.

The three-item phased approach requires the Commission to focus exclusively on three items. This year the priority is undoubtedly consideration of the question of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), which has been under discussion for three years. We earnestly expect all members of the Commission to make their best efforts to conclude consideration of this particular item by the end of the current session. The Commission should endeavour to make significant progress in the deliberations on the other two agenda items with a view to their successful conclusion.

I shall now broadly express our position on those three items.

My delegation attaches great importance to the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is, however, regrettable that despite the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in recent years, the SSOD IV has yet to be convened, and the 1997 session of the Commission failed to arrive at an agreement on the agenda and objectives of the session. We concur with the view that SSOD IV should have a balanced agenda, while taking into account the concerns of all States. However, we should be vigilant in order to ensure that the agenda of SSOD IV remains faithful to the priorities already established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I).

The positive developments in the field of disarmament, particularly in the area of chemical and biological weapons, provide a historic opportunity to take new steps towards the fulfilment of the priorities identified by SSOD I and to set the future course of action. Despite the fact that the probability of nuclear confrontation has now diminished, the nuclear threat, regionally and globally, still exists and threatens the future of mankind. This threat will not be completely eliminated unless it is dealt with in a serious and comprehensive manner. The time has come to address an issue of such paramount importance in the proper forums, especially in the SSOD IV.

To this end, the continued efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the effective reduction of the production and transfer of conventional weapons, are

undoubtedly imperative. In our view, the Chairman's paper on SSOD IV well reflects the views of all sides and thus deserves to serve as a basis for our work in the present session.

The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the establishment of zones free from weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in various regions as a step towards the achievement of a world free of these weapons.

It is widely recognized that the creation of additional nuclear-weapon-free zones in different regions of the world constitutes an important confidence-building and disarmament measure that enhances regional as well as global peace and security. This was reflected in the Final Document of SSOD I, in numerous subsequent documents and in the principles and objectives of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

This positive momentum will be revived if more States and regions are covered by the treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones, although we note that such regions already cover almost 50 per cent of the earth's land mass.

In the light of the constant support of the United Nations for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the accession to the NPT of all the regional parties except one, it seems extremely necessary to take constructive and practical measures towards the realization of this goal. The reported possession by Israel of nuclear weapons and its refusal to accept NPT obligations and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards have a grave destabilizing effect in the Middle East. It is essential to resolve this problem in order to diminish the perception of nuclear threat in the region, which has been marked by an arms race and militaristic ambitions. It is therefore imperative to direct all efforts towards making this region, once and for all, a zone free from weapons of mass destruction.

The experience gained in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions demonstrates that, despite the specific traits and characteristics of each zone, all nuclear-weapon-free zones share similar principles and objectives. The Commission has rightly been entrusted with the task of formulating recommendations and guidelines on the establishment of these zones. In doing so, we believe that the Commission should take into consideration the following principles: promoting the universality of the NPT; identifying and removing the obstacles that hinder the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in sensitive areas such as the Middle East; prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances; providing effective and verifiable mechanisms for nuclear-weapon-free zones; providing guarantees for all States to acquire and develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes; emphasizing the role of nuclear-weapon States in rendering assistance for the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zones and in refraining from any action that runs counter to this goal; encouraging States that have not yet done so to place all their nuclear activities and facilities under IAEA safeguards; and prohibiting attack or threat of attack on nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes, particularly those which are IAEA safeguards.

I shall now turn to the third item on the Commission's agenda: guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N. The flow of conventional arms is a universal problem, which has contributed to conflicts in different parts of the world. Arresting this unholy trade is a part of disarmament efforts, and as an international problem, it requires solutions based on international cooperation and a common approach. My delegation believes that in considering this important item, resolution 51/45 N should guide our work so that we can attain a tangible result.

We note with satisfaction the meeting of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, in which our experts made concrete recommendations on control over the flow of small arms. The Commission may consider the report of this Panel as a useful source for its further deliberations on this item.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate its willingness to cooperate with the Commission to achieve its desired goals.

Mr. Oussoupov (Kyrgyzstan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, upon your election to the chairmanship of the Commission and express confidence that your skilful leadership will guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion. We also congratulate Mr. Dhanapala on his well-deserved appointment to the post of Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

The end of the cold war and the warming of the international climate was accompanied by the growing interest of the Member States in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world. The idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia as an important step towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament has been expressed at different times by the leaders of the region. In this regard, the adoption of the Almaty Declaration by the heads of the Central Asian States in February 1997 was a significant step towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and the strengthening of peace and security in Central Asia.

Last year we were encouraged by the unanimous adoption of the General Assembly resolution in support of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. We regard it as a demonstration of the continuing commitment of the world community to the achievement of general and complete disarmament, building a safer world for the future. We hope that a consultative meeting of the experts of the region in Bishkek, our capital, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, welcomed by the General Assembly, will further advance this positive development.

In addressing the issue of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, Kyrgyzstan attaches great importance to the generally recognized role of the United Nations. It recognizes its rich experience in creating the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok. In our view, last year substantive deliberations in the Disarmament Commission made a useful contribution to a thorough consideration of this issue.

Kyrgyzstan is firmly convinced that the process of establishing any nuclear-weapon-free zone should be in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the zone in the exercise of their sovereignty, and should enjoy the support of all nuclear-weapon States. At the same time, every step in the direction of this final goal should be well thought out and consistent. We hope that during this session constructive discussion on this issue will lead to further progress on the elaboration of guidelines and recommendations for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. My delegation welcomes the initiative of Mongolia to declare a single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone as a further practical and logical step in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In conclusion, I would like to express our confidence that the Commission will make a meaningful and constructive contribution to the cause of disarmament. We are ready to provide our support to your efforts, Mr. Chairman, to bring deliberations in the Commission to fruition.

Mr. Larraín (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Commission at this substantive session. I should also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the excellent way in which Mr. Andelfo García presided over the previous session.

We are starting our work at a time when the disarmament structures at the heart of our Organization have been strengthened. We welcomed with profound satisfaction the establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, headed by Mr. Dhanapala as Under-Secretary-General. In this context we also welcome the retention of the posts of directors of the regional disarmament centres, a measure that our delegation very actively supported during the previous session.

I should like to emphasize that the delegation of Chile believes that the Disarmament Commission plays a special role in its capacity as the deliberative body of the multilateral disarmament mechanisms. The Commission has been working for some time to rationalize its tasks and has implemented a three-item phased programme. The ability to work on these items in depth and the universality of the Commission's composition are the most important and distinctive aspects of the Commission. We believe that the exchange of views that emerges from this session should be constructive in spirit and should look to the future. Undoubtedly there have been setbacks in the past, but our responsibility lies precisely in finding formulas that will allow us to continue to make progress on issues that have so many implications for the security of our world.

With regard to the item on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our support for the position of the non-aligned countries on this matter. Chile hopes that, given the cooperation of all and the necessary flexibility, we will be able to find the consensus necessary to give substantive content to the fourth special session devoted to disarmament, the convening of which has already been approved in a series of resolutions adopted by the Assembly. We also believe

that there is no doubt that its substance should reflect the fundamental changes that have taken place on the international scene since the holding of the previous special session, as well as the progress achieved in disarmament issues.

In this context, we believe that the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should pay particular attention to new ideas. For this reason, we are particularly interested in continuing to channel the participation and contributions of non-governmental organizations.

We believe that the inclusion of the item on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived among the States of the region concerned is a reflection of the growing importance of this far-reaching concept.

Chile believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones, together with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, constitute the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and therefore represent an important step in the struggle for the well-being and progress of peoples. We believe in the need to consolidate the objectives of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and therefore hope to continue to make progress on the path of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok. In this respect, the international community's recognition of the emergence of a southern hemisphere and adjacent areas free of nuclear weapons has been a significant step in reflecting the legitimate concerns of nuclear-weapon-free countries in more than half the surface of the world.

In the broad context of these zones, we also believe it relevant to highlight on this occasion the special importance that we attach to the adoption of measures that regulate the international maritime transport of radioactive waste and of nuclear spent fuel in accordance with the highest international levels of safety and security.

We certainly hope that the idea of converting most of the world into a nuclear-weapon-free zone will have an important effect as a model and will therefore serve to strengthen the process of nuclear disarmament as well as the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime.

Our delegation attaches special importance to conventional disarmament and arms control. In this respect, we wish to emphasize that Chile published, in August 1997, the first *Book of Defence* of Latin America, which explains with absolute transparency the foundations, the organization and the methods of its defence policy. On the basis of this important process of national transformation, we support the initiative of a group of interested countries that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/38 G, recently held their first meeting, which was aimed at fostering concrete disarmament measures to contribute to the consolidation of peace in processes in which the United Nations participates.

Lastly, I wish to reaffirm our complete readiness to cooperate with a view to the Commission's producing concrete results. We believe that this is the best way of strengthening it.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to offer our congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. We wish you every success in exercising your important responsibilities, and I want to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in ensuring the successful outcome of this session.

This current session of the Disarmament Commission is of special significance in view of the renewed emphasis of the United Nations on disarmament issues. The transformation of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs into the Department of Disarmament Affairs is the practical outcome of the reform efforts of the international community in this field. This spirit of reform necessitates a new, fresh look at the activities of this Commission and at the rationalization of deliberations in the First Committee. This is also a demand of our time, which has been marked by drastic changes in the international environment during the last decade.

A number of significant developments have also been recorded in the field of arms control and disarmament since the last session of the Commission. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) received worldwide support, giving strong impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, to which, as representatives know, Ukraine has made a substantial contribution. We also commend the recent presentation by two nuclear-weapon States — the United Kingdom and France — of their instruments of ratification of the CTBT.

The Chemical Weapons Convention also entered into force last April. It is encouraging that the parties concerned are making efforts to strengthen the

effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention. Steady progress has also been achieved in other areas of disarmament. Therefore, we should seize this opportunity and advance the course of disarmament through rational and business-like negotiations among States.

As an important multilateral body, the Disarmament Commission has for many years played a significant role in formulating guiding principles in the disarmament field. It is our hope that the Commission will be able to make further contributions to disarmament by adapting to the changed international situation. We believe that the list of items identified by the previous session of the Commission had laid a good foundation for further deliberations within its framework.

Ukraine continues to be committed to the principles of general and complete disarmament. Our delegation has been following with great attention the deliberations on the guidelines on conventional arms control. Such issues as the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and their excessive accumulation in certain countries and regions in a manner that is not commensurate with their legitimate security concerns, should constantly be the focus of attention by the United Nations.

We believe that the legitimate arms requirements of countries should be in line with the efforts of the international community to promote arms control and transparency in arms transfers. Having participated in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms since its establishment, Ukraine considers it as an effective mechanism for ensuring transparency and confidence-building, and we would like to encourage all States to support the functioning of the Register by providing all the necessary information to it.

As its contribution to international efforts to overcome the humanitarian crisis arising from the large-scale and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, Ukraine is strictly committed to the 1995 national moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines and is determined to prolong it further. Although Ukraine has not signed the Ottawa Convention, it fully supports the spirit of this important document. Ukraine does not produce the anti-personnel mines prohibited by that Convention and recently has voluntarily initiated the first stage of their destruction.

My delegation considers nuclear-weapon-free zones, established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, as an effective instrument to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The scope of nuclear-weapon-free zones has expanded significantly in recent years. The conclusion of the treaties of Pelindaba and Bangkok, in addition to the treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga, has made virtually all countries of the southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons.

The 1997 Almaty Declaration by the Heads of State of five Central Asian countries — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — laid the foundation of a new nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. We commend this regional effort by these friendly countries and wish them every success in their noble endeavour.

May I also recall that the idea of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in some parts of the European continent has from time to time appeared on the agendas of regional and international forums. Following its professed goal of nuclear disarmament, Ukraine initiated the idea of establishing such a zone in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, proceeding from the understanding that it could promote the formation of a new architecture of security and confidence-building in the European region. We would suggest that this idea, along with other influential factors, facilitated the decision made by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on the non-deployment of nuclear weapons on the territories of the new NATO members, as stated in the Brussels declaration of December 1996.

With this commitment undertaken by the Alliance, which to a large extent took into account the national interests of Ukraine, the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe does not leave the agenda of international negotiations in the field of arms control and disarmament. Rather, it becomes an item which in future could be implemented in the framework of the new architecture of a comprehensive European security. We believe that the practical implementation of this idea is a matter of time and circumstance.

Therefore, we are ready to continue the dialogue with the parties concerned, bearing in mind the differences of political, economic and strategic considerations.

At last year's session of the Disarmament Commission, many thoughts were expressed concerning the criteria for the establishment of an effective nuclear-weapon-free zone. We believe that those criteria are

highly important for future considerations. It is also the view of my delegation that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone should be supported by all countries concerned, including the States possessing nuclear weapons. We maintain that such States should not only respect the status of the nuclear-weapon-free zone, but also assume the relevant obligations with regard to security assurances for the States covered by the zone. The nuclear-weapon-free zone should also provide an effective mechanism of verification of the obligations assumed by the parties, including the application of full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards to all peaceful nuclear facilities in the zone.

Regarding the issue of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), resolution 52/38 F states that, subject to the emergence of a consensus on its objectives and agenda, the General Assembly will convene the fourth special session devoted to disarmament. It maintains that the exact date and further organizational matters relating to the convening of the special session will be subject to the outcome of deliberations at this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. In this context, my delegation would like to reiterate its previous position that consensus on SSOD IV's objectives and the balanced agenda relating both to weapons of mass destruction and to conventional ones is what we need most at this stage.

We sincerely hope that, within the time-frame of the current session, we will manage to overcome the stalemate on this issue in order to pave the way for working out a comprehensive and balanced agenda for disarmament in the twenty-first century.

Mr. McCook (Jamaica): My delegation wishes to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Bureau on your election to guide the work of the Commission at this session. We wish also to commend our colleague and friend, Ambassador García of Colombia, for his able leadership of the Commission at its last session.

Disarmament and arms control have long been recognized as cornerstones of efforts to secure and maintain peace and security. This year, the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission will pay special attention to the proposal for the convening of a fourth special session on disarmament. Discussions will also continue on the subject of nuclear-weapon-free zones and guidelines on conventional arms control and disarmament.

The Disarmament Commission's role in the United Nations disarmament machinery is to function as a specialized deliberative body for in-depth consideration of specific disarmament issues. It should not replicate the broader functions of the First Committee or the negotiating functions of the Conference on Disarmament. Bearing these distinctions in mind, my delegation will focus its attention on the issues that are before the Disarmament Commission at this session.

Recent changes in the global arena have contributed to useful advances in the disarmament process. The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the conclusion of a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and last year's conclusion of a Convention to ban anti-personnel landmines are clear examples of progress in certain aspects of the disarmament situation. It is noteworthy, however, that progress in these areas has been somewhat uneven and that in some cases the United Nations machinery has not been at the centre of these disarmament initiatives.

There can be no question that the advances in disarmament have benefited greatly from the end of the cold war and the greater capacity for cooperation on issues of disarmament and international security that this has engendered. It is in this context that my delegation urges the Disarmament Commission at this session to seek common ground on the objectives and the agenda of a fourth special session on disarmament, which the Non-Aligned Movement has repeatedly called for and on which some progress was made during the main part of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. The deliberations here in the Disarmament Commission provide a critical opportunity for us to build on the progress made on this issue and to try to reach agreement on outstanding points.

A highly focused special session on disarmament will provide an important opportunity to review the framework of disarmament in its broadest context. We should take advantage of the momentum which has developed in regard to small arms and certain other conventional weapons, and heightened global concern at the threat posed by nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. All these concerns, of which the people of the world are seized, demand leadership from the United Nations. The proposed special session on disarmament can provide such a forum and the leadership in disarmament issues that we feel is vital at this juncture.

It cannot do so, however, unless we demonstrate in this forum the capacity to confront the spectrum of disarmament issues. We cannot proceed without a preparedness to put all the issues of concern on the table to be meaningfully addressed. It is the hope of my delegation that we can reach agreement on the objectives and the agenda of the session in the coming weeks.

My country, part of the Latin American and Caribbean region, which has had a nuclear-weapon-free zone for several decades, is pleased at the progress made by certain regions towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. It is the hope of my delegation that regions that have not yet have been able to reach agreement on this mechanism for their region will continue to pursue efforts so to do.

My delegation firmly believes that the maintenance of arsenals above and beyond levels necessary for national security undermines peace and security. In this context, we repeat our call for restraint in the arms trade and view the discussions on guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament as an important aspect of the work of this session. In this connection, my delegation wishes to stress the importance of measures aimed at arresting the flow of illicit arms in all aspects, in particular its relationship to the multi-billion-dollar illicit trade in narcotic drugs. We are pleased that, within our region, an Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials was agreed upon last year. We have also followed with interest the initiatives led by Mali and other African States in this area.

We are convinced that an examination and adoption of new and innovative measures to limit the flood of guns in the international marketplace will contribute greatly to our efforts to promote enhanced peace and security at the national and international levels. In this regard, special responsibility must be assumed by arms-producing nations. Consideration must be given to the role of suppliers in fuelling conflicts by supporting arms build-ups in areas of tension. Similarly, careful attention must be paid to the question of laxity in the sale of deadly weapons and inadequate controls over these exports, which ultimately contribute to increased crime and terrorism and the destabilization of certain societies.

The disarmament challenge at the end of this millennium is a practical one. Stripped of many of the complexities of the cold war, the disarmament objective is simple: to limit the prospect for mayhem and the exacerbation of deadly conflict by reducing the wanton excesses in global arsenals.

Finally, my delegation wishes to stress the important benefits that can be derived in the area of development through disarmament and arms-control efforts. The transfer of energies from arms proliferation to development can only help improve the well-being of peoples who suffer from the diversion of scarce resources to the maintenance and build-up of weapons arsenals.

My delegation looks forward to working constructively with you, Mr. Chairman, in order to make progress on the items before us at this session.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Andemicael (International Atomic Energy Agency): I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Disarmament Commission on behalf of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Our statement will focus on agenda item 4, relating to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which is of particular interest to the IAEA.

By satisfying specific regional concerns and needs, arrangements such as nuclear-weapon-free-zones complement global security. They are accordingly the "value-added" to global arrangements.

Specific security concerns vary from region to region. However, there are common features in nuclear-weapon-free arrangements. The three most common are, first, the prohibition of the possession, development, acquisition or deployment of nuclear weapons within the area of the relevant treaty's application; secondly, negative security assurances from the nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the parties to the treaty; and thirdly, a control system designed for the verification of compliance with the legal obligations assumed by the parties.

Each control system offers a combination of complementary global and regional recourses which are designed to satisfy global and regional concerns. In the global context, the obligation placed upon parties to the zone to accept comprehensive IAEA safeguards is regarded as a central element. In the regional context, the arrangements crafted to address regional concerns are usually to be triggered by special or exceptional

circumstances. In such circumstances, parties to the relevant legal instruments have recognized and made provision for remedial measures going beyond the purely regional. Hence, the IAEA is called upon to perform what are known as special inspections in accordance with the terms of the treaty in question.

Parties to existing nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties are required to submit all their nuclear material to IAEA safeguards. Although safeguards are neither the first nor the only barrier to proliferation, it is widely recognized that effective safeguards provide the international community with assurances about the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear material and activities. Safeguards make any diversion from peaceful uses more difficult and thus contribute to the security of States and of the international community.

Perceptions about nuclear security have evolved considerably since the late 1960s, when the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) were negotiated. The change has been particularly evident in the 1990s, reflecting geopolitical changes resulting from the end of the cold war. The strengthening of the IAEA's safeguards system owes much to changes in perception about nuclear security. The post-Gulf-war discovery that Iraq, a party to the NPT, had a secret nuclear programme highlighted the limitations of the "classic" safeguards system with its emphasis on declared nuclear material. It also changed the expectations placed upon the safeguards system by the international community. Most important was the recognition that, to function more effectively, the safeguards system needs a high capacity to detect any undeclared nuclear programmes. With this key consideration in mind, the policy-making organs of the Agency have approved a comprehensive catalogue of measures aimed at much greater transparency about the nuclear activities of States as a means towards more effective verification. These include, primarily, measures to detect any undeclared nuclear activities.

The measures most recently approved by the IAEA Board of Governors are embodied in a model text entitled "Model protocol additional to the agreement(s) between State(s) and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the application of safeguards". The new measures aim to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system as a contribution to global non-proliferation objectives. It is recalled that the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons called upon States parties to support and implement measures to strengthen the Agency's safeguards system. Parties to safeguards agreements would be taking a major step in this direction by concluding with the IAEA protocols additional to their respective safeguards agreements, on the basis of the Agency's model text.

At the regional level, changing perceptions about what constitutes nuclear security have also resulted in an expansion of the role attributed to the IAEA in verifying compliance with nuclear-weapon-free-zone obligations. The first nuclear-weapon-free zones, in both uninhabited and populated zones, were created against the backdrop of the narrower, military definition of security and represented the regional or zonal approach to military denuclearization.

I shall now comment on the specific nuclear-weapon-free zones. The first zonal approach to non-proliferation in a populated zone — the Treaty of Tlatelolco — was originally reflective of such a concept about security. The Treaty of Tlatelolco obliges each contracting party to negotiate multilateral or bilateral safeguards agreements with the Agency within a specific time-frame. A further principal component of the Tlatelolco control system is the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL), created to supervise the Treaty's implementation, ensure compliance and interact with the IAEA.

In August 1992, the General Conference of OPANAL amended articles 14 to 16 of the Treaty, which are relevant to the control system, to enhance the potential role to be played by the IAEA in carrying out any special inspections required under the Treaty. The IAEA will now not only perform inspections in the safeguards context but may, if requested, also verify compliance with all of the obligations assumed by the parties.

For full entry into force for the entire zone, article 13 of the Treaty requires that all contracting parties must have concluded the relevant safeguards agreements with the IAEA. To date, 32 out of 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries are party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Moreover, safeguards agreements satisfying the requirements of article 13 are in force in 31 States. The Treaty could soon enter into force for the entire region if the remaining State ratified the Treaty and if the two remaining safeguards agreements were concluded.

I turn now to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga). Although the Treaty of Rarotonga shares similarities with the Treaty of Tlatelolco, there are some differences. Notably, the former includes new provisions for export controls and for the prevention of the dumping of nuclear wastes within the zone of application. This is a provision reflecting a key environmental concern about radioactive contamination that is shared in the region.

Rarotonga also provides for a control system, which includes a consultative committee responsible for consultations and cooperation on all aspects of the Treaty. Further elements include application of IAEA safeguards, provisions for reports and exchanges of information among the parties and complaint procedures. There are now 11 parties to the Treaty of Rarotonga, each with a comprehensive safeguards agreement in force with the IAEA.

Turning now to Africa, the Treaty of Pelindaba was opened for signature on 11 April 1996 and currently has 53 signatories. It shall enter into force upon the date of deposit of the twenty-eighth instrument of ratification. So far, five African countries have ratified the Treaty. It should be noted that the existing NPT safeguards agreements of African States will be applied for the purposes of the Pelindaba Treaty. In this regard, 20 African States already have such agreements, but more than 30 others have yet to conclude an agreement with the IAEA or bring into force the one they have already signed.

The IAEA was more closely involved in crafting Pelindaba than any other zonal treaty. A senior IAEA representative participated in meetings of the group of experts that prepared the Treaty — specifically, to help with drafting the verification provisions. Those provisions not only entrust the Agency with verifying compliance with the peaceful-use undertakings of the parties, but also address such issues as prohibition of armed attack on nuclear installations, the physical protection of nuclear material, prohibition of the dumping of nuclear waste, other regional preoccupations such as the possibility of undeclared nuclear explosive devices and the destruction or conversion to peaceful uses of any facilities for manufacturing such devices that might exist. Such provisions reflect specific African regional, political and security preoccupations of the 1990s.

The verification and complaints provisions of the Pelindaba Treaty go further than Rarotonga's. They assign to the IAEA the verification of compliance with "traditional" safeguards obligations and also functions such as verifying, along with the African Commission on Nuclear Energy, the destruction or dismantling of any nuclear devices and the destruction or conversion of relevant production facilities.

Moreover, greater interaction than in earlier comparable arrangements is foreseen between the IAEA and the Commission. The complaints procedures, as in the case of Rarotonga, give the regional body responsibility for requesting special inspections as a last resort, to investigate complaints. In the case of Pelindaba, the Commission may request that the IAEA conduct special inspections, when needed, and it is to receive reports of the Agency's findings in such instances. The Pelindaba Commission may also send its own representatives to accompany the Agency's inspection team and can also establish its own inspection mechanisms. Special inspections under Pelindaba are foreseen as a means of investigating any possible violations of the Treaty. The Treaty also actively promotes peaceful nuclear activities by the parties in the interest of sustainable social and economic development in Africa and encourages parties to make use of the programmes of assistance available in the IAEA.

I turn now to the Bangkok Treaty. It covers 10 South-East Asian States, was signed in Bangkok in 1995 and entered into force in 1997, upon receiving sufficient ratifications. I think nine countries have ratified it. Some elements of the control system of the Bangkok Treaty go even further than those of the Rarotonga or Pelindaba Treaties. For example, the system provides, in article 13 of the Treaty, for "fact-finding missions" to clarify and resolve situations

> "which may be considered ambiguous or which may give rise to doubts about compliance with the provisions of this Treaty".

Those missions are foreseen, as a matter of course, to consist of three IAEA inspectors. Moreover, the Treaty, *inter alia*, requires parties to subject their peaceful nuclear-energy programmes to a rigorous nuclear-safety assessment conforming to IAEA-recommended guidelines and standards. Obligations such as these, together with the anti-dumping provisions, could involve even greater interaction with the IAEA than those foreseen in other nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Director General of the IAEA recently brought the text of the Bangkok Treaty to the attention of the Agency's Board of Governors.

Regarding the Middle East, there is much concern about the military potential of nuclear energy in the Middle East. An approach adopted to address such concerns advocates the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. There is general agreement that the establishment of such a zone is key to ensuring against nuclear proliferation in the region and would constitute an important step towards the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The IAEA General Conference has mandated the Director General, *inter alia*, to prepare model agreements as a necessary step towards the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone. Pursuant to that, the IAEA Secretariat has engaged in consultations with all States of the Middle East, including through visits to the region by the Director General. In order to develop meaningful model verification agreements, however, the Agency is of the view that it must have a clearer idea of what obligations the parties to a future nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty would be willing to undertake. Security-related verification arrangements need to be the most intense in areas marked by deep conflict and mistrust. In that context, the Agency is of the view that any future nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would seem to call for rigorous, intrusive verification. Precisely what arrangements this would entail is for the parties to any such zone to decide.

As regards recent developments in other regions, the proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia demonstrates further how notions of security have changed from more traditional, military definitions to a broader concept responsive to other immediate regional concerns. Building upon a concept launched at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly and on the Almaty Declaration of 1997, the five Central Asian republics endorsed at their recent Tashkent conference the creation of a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone. They underscored not only the relevance of fully effective IAEA safeguards to verify compliance with peaceful-use undertakings, but also the importance to them of environmental safety as a strategic component of nuclear security. The IAEA has been invited to participate in a further meeting of the States concerned at the margins of the next session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference, soon to be held in Geneva.

In conclusion, I would like to stress three points. First, the basic goal of nuclear-weapon-free zones is to enhance nuclear security by, *inter alia*, strengthening non-proliferation and disarmament objectives. As I mentioned earlier, with the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions, the concept of nuclear security has evolved progressively. Depending on the special circumstances of a region, the control mechanism may now include not only the central function of safeguards as a means of verifying compliance with peaceful-use undertakings but also such elements as anti-dumping provisions, prohibition of armed attack on nuclear installations, nuclear safety provisions, export control measures and the destruction or conversion of any facilities previously used for manufacturing nuclear explosives. The regional dimension of addressing such regional preoccupations is reflected in, *inter alia*, provisions encouraging increased cooperation among the parties to ensure peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The global dimension is reflected in provisions such as those which assign to the IAEA the role of verifying compliance with obligations not to divert nuclear material from peaceful uses to any proscribed activities. Furthermore, recent nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties have entrusted the agency with an expanded verification role applicable to all provisions of those treaties.

Secondly, fundamental to all is the effective verification of legal commitments freely entered into. It should be noted that the IAEA Statute and the existing mandates concerning verification are sufficiently flexible to enable the Agency to tailor verification measures to any specific requirements. This it has done and stands ready to do as required and requested in the future.

Finally, I would like to stress the importance of all parties to the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties concluding safeguards agreements with the IAEA. In the case of parties to the NPT which are also parties to nuclear-weapon-free zone arrangements, existing NPT safeguards agreements are regarded as satisfying the requirements of the relevant zonal treaty. It is necessary for the effectiveness of those treaties and of the non-proliferation regime in general that the remaining parties complete the safeguards requirements by concluding full-scope safeguards agreements with the Agency. The IAEA will continue to facilitate this process.

Programme of work

The Chairman: I would like to inform the Commission that consultations in the Bureau and the regional Groups are continuing on how to approach complying with the decision of the General Assembly, as reflected in resolution A/52/12 B, that the Disarmament Commission should undertake a review of its work. A set

of possibilities is being discussed for debating this issue, probably on Wednesday morning. Since, as I have stressed, the consultations are continuing, I am not in a position to inform representatives when and specifically in what format the discussion will take place. Therefore, I would urge all representatives to consult the daily *Journal*, where an appropriate announcement will be made after the conclusion of consultations. Meanwhile, I urge delegations involved in consultations to conduct them and, hopefully, conclude them as expeditiously as possible so that we can maintain the pace of work that we have established in the first two days of the work of the Commission.

The timetable for the next week of our work will be distributed tomorrow in the subsidiary bodies in the form which was endorsed at the Bureau meeting today. Tomorrow the Working Groups are starting their work, and I would like to wish success to all the participants, especially the Chairmen of the Groups. We expect to hear their progress reports after next week's labours.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.